

This is possibly the southernmost record of Common Pochard and the second record of the occurrence of Tufted Pochard after 45 years in its southern most range.

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#### 14. RARE CRANE OF INDIA

On 2nd of December 1992 while entering within the Bhutanghat Forests of the core area of Buxa Tiger Reserve a pair of Blacknecked crane *Grus nigricollis* Przevalski was sighted, on a freshly harvested paddy field.

This large crane having a black neck, and a milky white body, breeds in Ladakh. The reports of the wintering of these cranes were so far known only from the upper reaches of Bhutan and the hills of Arunachal Pradesh not below 2000 m altitude. The pair sighted in Mainabari Beat of Buxa Tiger reserve near Bhutanghat Forest is more or less a Bhabar tract having an altitude of 200 m. only.

The Director of the International Crane Foundation, George Archibald has confirmed that the photograph of the crane taken within Buxa Tiger Reserve as of the

Blacknecked Crane and stated that it as an extremely unusual drop in the wintering habits for the species to be found in the Indian plains. Interestingly enough the local villagers confirmed its arrival every year during this period and the Wild Life Conservator Shri M.K. Nandi, has also confirmed sighting of this species at Chapramari sanctuary of West Bengal which again is a bhabar area.

This first report of a Blacknecked Crane in West Bengal; as well as from any place at such low altitude during the winter season is noteworthy. Let us hope for sighting this bird every year in Buxa Tiger Reserve.

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#### 15. COMMENTS ON THE NOTE OCCURRENCE OF BLACK TERN *CHLIDONIAS NIGER* (LINNAEUS) AT POINT CALIMERE BY VIVEK MENON

The occurrence of black tern *Chlidonias niger* at Point Calimere was earlier reported by Abdulali and Ambedkar (1983) and Natarajan and Balasubramanian (1990). Its further occurrence at Point Calimere had been confirmed

under the Bird Migration studies conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) by ringing 48 individuals of the same species by me between 1989-1991. Also 17 individuals were ringed at Kaliveli Lake and one from

TABLE I  
MEASUREMENTS OF *CHLIDONIAS NIGER*

Wing	Bill (from feather)	Tarus	Outer	Tail	Central	Fork	n
201-226	25-30	15-18	69 (Cramp 1985)		57	10-16	38
205-210	23-26	-	70-76 (Natarajan & Balasubramanian 1990)		64-66	6-10	3
194-222	23-27	17-22	62-82 (Balachandran, unpubl.)		-	-	48
202	28.5	17	(Mohapatra, unpubl.)			-	1
257	40	19	107		63	44	1

Pulicat Lake. As there is no specimen at the BNHS, the measurements of the species is not given in the HANDBOOK. However, the biometrics of three individuals ringed by Natarajan and Balasubramanian is the only available measurements for this species from India which fall within the range of the measurements given by Cramp (1985) with slight variation in tarsus length (Table 1). The measurements obtained from the remaining individuals tallies with the measurements of Cramp (loc. cit.) with slight variations. These slight variations may be due to the differences in the measurements of the museum and live specimens. But the measurements given by Vivek Menon is no way in the close ranges of this species, except the

tarsus. For example wing, bill, and tail measurements exceeded the maximum ranges by 31 mm, 10 mm and 28 mm respectively. The fork (the difference between T1 (63) and T6 (107) is 44 mm, which is also too much for this species, as this species has almost a squarish tail with the maximum fork length of 16 mm. From the measurements the species mentioned in the note (JBNHS Vol. 89(1): 120) is not the black tern but probably a common tern *Sterna hirundo*.

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#### 16. FOREST EAGLE OWL (*BUBO NIPALENSIS* HODGSON) — A PREDATOR OF THE INDIAN GIANT SQUIRREL (*RATUFA INDICA*)

On 29 October 1992, at about 9.30 a.m., I was conducting a routine bird census along the trail across the evergreen Forests of Karian Shola National Park (10°28'N; 76°50'E) near Top Slip, Tamil Nadu. Hearing a commotion ahead, I saw a Forest Eagle Owl flying across the trail a little distance from me, and alighting on a small tree. Dangling from its talons was the partially eaten carcass of an Indian Giant Squirrel. For nearly five minutes the owl remained perched there ignoring the ceaseless agitations by the many bulbuls and drongos around. Eventually the owl saw me and flew away deeper into the Forest, leaving the prey hanging on the limb. A couple of days later, the carcass was still there.

The Forest Eagle Owl is an efficient predator against a variety of forest dwelling small to medium sized animals, a list of which is given by Ali and Ripley (1987). Since the Giant Squirrel does not feature in this list, and considering the endangered status of these squirrels, I decided that this rarely seen incident was worthy of recording. Incidentally, Borges (1986) reports a predation attempt on this squirrel by the Black Eagle (*Ictinaetus malayensis*) a raptor which is seen regularly at the Karian Shola National Park.

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#### 17. NOTES ON THE STATUS AND ECOLOGY OF THE CEYLON FROGMOUTH (*BATRACHOSTOMUS MONILIGER* BLYTH) FROM THE ANAIMALAI HILLS OF TAMIL NADU

The status of the Ceylon Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger* was little known and was a cause for concern until the publication of Sugathan's (1981, JBNHS 78: 309-316) in which he revealed that the bird exists in reasonable numbers in the state of Kerala. His surveys did not, however, cover the adjacent hill forests of Western

Tamil Nadu from where no published information on the bird exists. This note throws light on its occurrence in Tamil Nadu and its status in the Anaimalai hills. Anecdotal information on the birds' habits and habitat are also given.

During 22 months of intensive field-work in the forests of Topslip (10°28' N; 76°51' E), seven birds were encountered